

March 2011

Santa Rosa County District 4 Newsletter

A Message From Your Commissioner



**District 4
Commissioner
Jim Melvin**

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March...in like a lion and out like a lamb (we hope). Very soon our parks will be full to overflowing with baseball teams of all shapes and sizes. Tee ball, little league and the bigger kids, boys and girls will be taking to the diamonds. Proud parents and grandparents will be packing the stands. Santa Rosa in general and district four in particular, have excellent park systems. Our facilities are second to none. And they are getting better. Among the projects I have underway is the installation of a commercial grade fry hood, complete with the required fire suppression equipment in the concession booth in the Navarre Park. I am also working with a citizens group to expand the dog park areas on the perimeter of the Navarre Sports Complex.

I have several recreational projects underway on the beach. I have agreed to fund half of the cost of the snorkeling and diving reefs on the beach with the Tourist Development Council funding the other half. This project has one Eco-system reef structure just off the beach (240 feet out from the mean high tide line) on the gulf side of the Navarre Beach Park, and two Eco-System Reefs in the sound. The gulf side reef system will consist of 30 individual reef structures. This Eco-System reef will measure 275 feet (north/south) by 82 feet (east/west). The sound side Eco-System reef structure will consist of 105 individual reefs, located near the western end of the park, and in about 20 feet of water. Both the gulf and sound side reef systems will be covered by about 6 feet of water. Both systems will very quickly attract numerous varieties of sea life. For diver safety, both areas will be clearly marked with the internationally recognized dive markers. These areas will be off limits to watercraft.

Additionally, the county has applied for a \$200,000 grant to install walkovers, a canoe launch, and outdoor educational seating area in the area locally known as Mom's Beach (the sound side beach area in the park across from Juana's). If we succeed in winning the grant, I will match the grant with recreation dollars for a total of \$400,000 of infrastructure improvements to that area.

Santa Rosa is blessed with a wide variety of fun and exciting ways to enjoy our wonderful weather. I wish you and yours a happy and safe spring and summer season.

*- Jim Melvin
District 4 Commissioner*

South End Solid Waste Service Providers Selected

After much discussion at the meetings on February 24 and March 7 and 10, the Santa Rosa County Board of Commissioners agreed not to make south end residential solid waste services mandatory at this time. Contract negotiations with the two originally selected service providers, Waste Management and Waste Pro, will continue with service beginning in June or July.

One hauler will provide service to one of the two service franchise areas, one generally the unincorporated areas of the 32563 zip code and the other generally the 32566 zip code. It is yet to be determined which company will service which area. Service will include twice per week pick-up service, weekly recycling utilizing a single roll away container, removal of yard debris every other week, and bulk item disposal on demand for approximately \$52 per quarter.

One single residential solid waste hauler will have many benefits including more services for a reduced cost to our residents, help alleviate traffic and excess wear and tear on roads from multiple haulers' trucks, and the ability to hold a service provider accountable for damage or clean up.

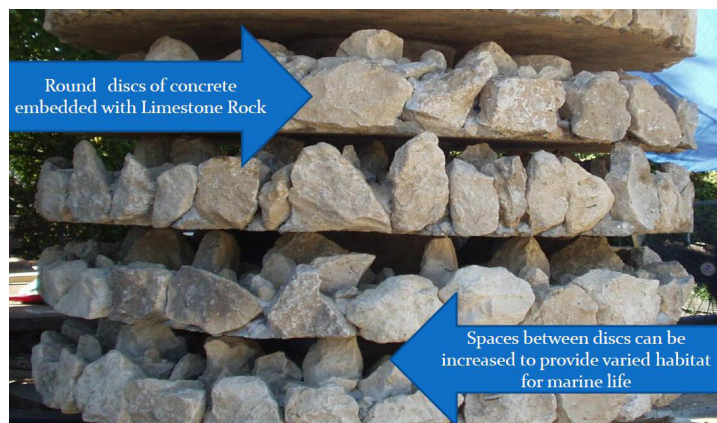


The Journey to Reefs

Since 1999, the development of a marine sanctuary off of Navarre Beach has been a project for multiple organizations. The state was the first organization in charge of the sanctuary, as it promised to build the sanctuary as part of its agreement with the county. When the park was turned back over to Santa Rosa County after Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis the Navarre Beach Marine Sanctuary Committee, a committee of the Navarre Beach Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Inc., was formed and took over the project. Hundreds of people and businesses have been involved in the Navarre Beach Marine Sanctuary Committee over the years in one form or another – volunteering for events, attending meetings, writing grants, designing brochures and advertising, sponsoring events, and fundraising. Without the hard work and dedication of all these people and businesses, beach-accessible reefs on Navarre Beach would still be a fantasy. The committee is pleased to have committed funds from the county and Santa Rosa TDC for the installation of three reefs off of Navarre Beach, one in the Gulf and two in the sound. The committee is patiently awaiting the final signature on the final permit, which should be complete by June of this year. Installation will start shortly after permits are in hand and is expected to take a couple of weeks

for each reef. After the reefs are installed the committee will begin planning and fundraising for the third and final phase of the sanctuary plan – an observation pier over the gulf-side reef.

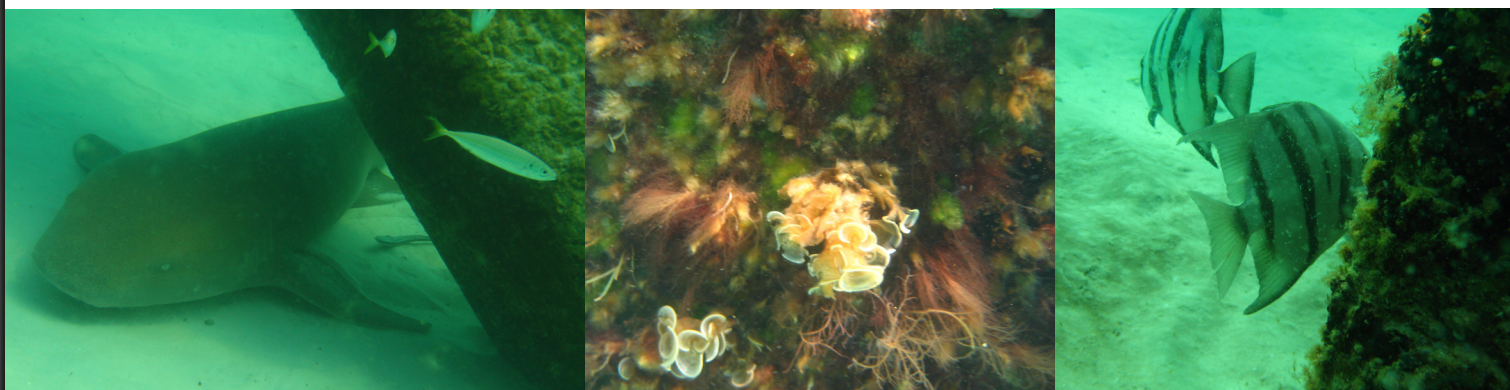
The positive impact of the reefs on the community is astounding. Environmental benefits include increased biodiversity, cleaner water through oyster growth, and the creation of 124,480 square feet of marine habitat. Oysters have the ability to filter up to 50 gallons of water a day. Each reef structure in the sound (105 total) has the potential to support 360 oysters. A few weeks after reef installation attached growth, including oysters, will be seen. The attached growth and vegetation will soon attract fish and other marine animals. This effect will move up the food chain until large marine mammals and birds begin to use the reefs as a food source. The reefs will also provide protective homes for juvenile fish and other juvenile marine organisms to grow and reproduce. Residents and visitors will be able to safely snorkel to the new habitat and view its flora and fauna. The recreation and eco-tourism site the reefs provide is expected to bring a minimum 25 percent increase in tourism dollars. John Dodrill of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has said the near-shore reefs in the Florida



Panhandle would have an overall economic impact of \$138 for every dollar spent. Educational benefits include providing a convenient study area for the Marine Science Station at the park, increased opportunities for reef studies by area educational institutions, and educational information for park visitors. For more information visit www.navarrebeachmarinesanctuary.com.

Photos Above: Examples of the reef structure and installation.

Photos Below: Wildlife and growth found at the reefs made from the old Navarre Beach Pier rubble is similar to what will be found at the new Navarre reefs.





Santa Rosa District 4 News

New Dog Park News

A new dog park for large dogs over 25 pounds will be constructed on High School Boulevard across the road from the Navarre Gym. Amenities will include a fenced and irrigated grassed area, security lighting, galvanized automatic watering bowl, benches, and a 12 foot x 24 foot pavilion.

The existing dog park, which is north of the Navarre gym, will be converted to allow only small dogs, up to 25 pounds. Improvements will be made to include an irrigated grassed area, galvanized automatic watering bowl, and security lighting.

The construction and improvements are estimated to cost \$26,000 and will be funded from district four recreation funds. The anticipated completion date for all improvements is mid-summer.



Commissioner Melvin South End Office Hours

South end residents wishing to meet with District 4 Commissioner Melvin without driving to Milton will now have a regular opportunity to do so on the first Wednesday of each month. Citizens can find the commissioner at the Navarre Visitor Center located 8543 Navarre Parkway from 8:30 to noon and in the afternoon by appointment.

It is expected that these road paving projects will be completed in the next six to eight months unless significant weather delays are experienced.

Santa Rosa County also resurfaces paved roads that are in poor condition. These roads are also rated, with the major emphasis being on the condition of the pavement. On March 10, the county commission also approved the district four resurfacing of Blackwater Drive and Camp Henderson Road (from S.R. 87 to Peppermint Lane) at an estimated cost of \$45,936.

District Four Paving and Resurfacing Projects

Santa Rosa County has an ongoing program to pave county maintained dirt roads. Paving dirt roads reduces maintenance, provides a better quality of life for residents living along dirt roads, and is beneficial to our environment.

Dirt roads are rated in a formula that considers the number of homes served by the road, the amount of maintenance performed on the road, the type of road, and the length of the road. A priority list is created from the rating system and the public works director makes recommendations for paving the higher priority roads to the county commission. Typically, between 10 and

15 miles of dirt road paving are funded and completed county-wide each year.

The Santa Rosa County Road and Bridge Department performs all aspects of dirt road paving construction with the exception of actually laying the asphalt with a paving machine, which is done by a contractor. Work performed by county employees includes sub-base construction, base construction including hauling base material, spreading material, compaction, and final grading, and dressing of road shoulders which includes seeding, mulching, and fertilization. The work performed by county forces provides a significant savings to the taxpayers of our county.

On March 10, the following dirt road projects were approved in district four by the county commission at an estimated cost of \$104,571:

- Big Buck Road
- St. Joseph Street
- Horizon Road
- Sabol Road
- Bright Oak Circle
- Wren Road





Santa Rosa District 4 News

Upgrades Made to Navarre Sports Complex Concession Building

District 4 recreation funds are being utilized to update the main concession at the Navarre Sports Complex. Work to install an exhaust hood, wet chemical fire suppression system, fire wrap, electric griddle and dual fryer will allow NYSA to prepare and serve fried foods, griddle cooked foods and even breakfast items if they wish - the food possibilities are endless.

The complex, located at 8840 High School Boulevard in Navarre, encompasses 30 acres and accommodates basketball, cheerleading, football, gymnastics, softball and tee ball activities. The Navarre Sports Complex is owned and maintained by the Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners and the Navarre Youth Sports Association operates the programs. Concession sales are used to help fund the community programs offered by NYSA.



East Bay Multi-Purpose Path Construction Continues

Multi-purpose path construction is continuing on East Bay Boulevard or C.R. 399 with the phase currently under construction being 1,450 feet in length. In this phase, the path from Galleon Drive to Grand Bay Subdivision is being constructed utilizing district four recreation funds. At the March 10 commission meeting, an additional phase funded by transportation impact fees was approved. This new phase totals 2.7 miles and continues the path from Grand Bay Subdivision to Edgewood Drive.

The path is eight feet wide in order to accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. However, it will narrow in width over Tom King Bayou in order to utilize the existing bridge walkway to cross over the bayou. It is constructed of concrete poured over a sand-clay base in order to provide a very durable path that will be in service for many years. Several timber walk bridges are included in the project to cross over wide drainage areas. The project is being constructed by the Santa Rosa County Road and Bridge Department rather than being contracted in order to provide a significant savings to our taxpayers. Construction time is expected to be 18 to 24 months to complete both the current and new phase of the project.

Navarre Beach Park Grant Application

A grant application for improvements to Navarre Beach Park was recently submitted through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Proposed improvements include beach access boardwalks, canoe/kayak launch, an outdoor educational seating area, and native habitat planting. As a main component of the application, the boardwalks will provide developed pedestrian access to the water where none currently exists. The amount requested is \$200,000 which will be matched with local recreation funding for a total project cost of \$400,000.

During the application process, feedback on proposed improvements was solicited through public meetings and written survey. The results of the survey are online at www.santarosa.fl.gov/parks/navarrebeach.html. Notification of grant awards is expected to occur by July 2011. If approved, the project could begin in late 2011.

Navarre Beach Lifeguard Season Begins

Lifeguard season on Navarre Beach started on Saturday, March 12. Lifeguards will be on duty daily, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. Staff will monitor the number of beach goers near the four lifeguard towers located along the public beach areas near the Navarre Beach Pier and inside Navarre Beach Park, manning the one to two towers with the greatest need. As the number of swimmers increase, lifeguard coverage will expand to all gulf-side public beach areas. Lifeguard season ends on Sunday, October 30.

When enjoying Navarre's beaches, residents and visitors are asked to exercise caution and use common sense, including heeding the warnings of beach flags. Beach conditions can be checked on the county's Website at www.santarosa.fl.gov, by selecting the Navarre Beach Surf Report button.

